

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 01663 301606Z

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0283

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 1663

E.O. GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJECT: AERIAL SURVEY

REF: STATE 17992

1. DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION MASTERS DISCUSSED

THE AERIAL SURVEY WITH GENERAL KRIANGSAK FOR OVER AN HOUR ON JANUARY 29. THE DCM POINTED OUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS SURVEY FOR DEVELOPMENT WORK IN NORTHERN THAILAND. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE PROJECT WOULD BE UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE ROYAL THAI SURVEY DEPARTMENT AND THAT NO FOREIGNERS WOULD HAVE ACCESS TO THE PHOTOGRAPHY WITHOUT THE RTG'S PERMISSION. THE DCM ALSO NOTED THAT THE CONTRACT HAD BEEN SIGNED AND THAT IF THE RTG DID NOT PROCEED WITH THE PROJECT, UNFAVORABLE REACTION WITHIN THE USG MIGHT OPEN TO QUESTION THE SERIOUSNESS OF THAILAND'S COMMITMENT TO THE ANTI-NARCOTICS PROGRAM HE ALSO STRESSED UNFORABLE REACTION WHICH CANCELLATION OF CONTRACT WOULD HAVE IN WASHINGTON AND BASIC QUESTIONS SUCH ACTIONS WOULD RAISE ABOUT THAILAND'S COMMITMENT TO ANTI-NARCOTICS PROGRAMS.

2. KRIANGSAK REPLIED THAT HE FULLY SUPPORTED THE RTG ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORT AND THAT HE NO LONGER OPPOSED THE AERIAL SURVEY. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT HIS CONCERN IS NATIONAL SECURITY AND THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY CONSULTED REGARDING THE PURPOSES OF THE AERIAL SURVEY. HE

MENTIONED THAT DR. THALERNG, DEPUTY MINISTER OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATIVES, HAD STOPPED TO SEE HIM SEVERAL MONTHS AGO FOR "ONLY TWO MINUTES" ON THE SUBJECT. KRIANGSAK ALSO SAID HE WAS CONCERNED THAT THE CABINET HAD ISSUED AN ORDER

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 01663 301606Z

PROHIBITING AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY ON A SCALE LARGER THAN ONE

TO 50,000. HE SAID THAT THE SUBSEQUENT CABINET ORDER FOR AN AERIAL SURVEY AT ONE TO 15,000 CONFLICTED WITH THE EARLIER ORDER AND THAT HE MUST CLARIFY THIS MATTER BEFORE HE COULD PROCEED.

3. THE DCM POINTED OUT THAT NATIONAL SECURITY WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY THE SURVEY. HE URGED GENERAL KRIANGSAK TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEMS.

4. KRIANGSAK SAID HE WOULD CONTACT THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE CABINET TO TRY TO CLARIFY THE CONFLICTING ORDERS. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE WOULD TRY TO FIND A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM. KRIANGSAK SAID HE WOULD NOTIFY THE EMBASSY AS SOON AS HE HAD FURTHER NEWS. DCM STRESSED THE NEED FOR QUICK ACTION.

5. COMMENT: WHATEVER HIS REASON, KRIANGSAK MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE IS THE ONLY PERSON HOLDING UP THE SURVEY. HE APPEARED, HOWEVER, TO RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SURVEY. WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN GIVEN THE HISTORY OF THIS PROJECT BUT WE BELIEVE THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE KRIANGSAK WILL TRY TO FIND AN ACCEPTABLE FACESAVING WAY TO LET THE SURVEY PROCEED. IF HE DOES NOT CONTACT THE EMBASSY BY FRIDAY, JANUARY 31 WE WILL CONTACT HIM AGAIN. APPROACHES AT HIGHER LEVELS AT THIS TIME WOULD BE TOTALLY COUNTERPRODUCTIVE.
KINTNER

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